

MEDICAREMATTERS

Special Edition

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IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT PART D TRANSITION COVERAGE

As the **formal transition period ends**, there are a couple of steps that you can suggest people take, who are newly enrolled in a prescription drug plan, in response to questions they may have:

1. Contact your prescription drug plan to make sure your medications are covered by the plan; and
2. If you're taking a medication that is not covered by your plan, talk with your pharmacist and/or doctor to learn what drug can be used in place of the current medication. Or work with your physician to obtain an exception to stay on your original drug.



Should I switch to another drug plan that covers the prescription I need?

"Medicare drug plans must continue their transition plan through March 31, 2006. The purpose of the 90-day transition period is that if you enrolled in the first few months of the program, you have time to work with your doctor and find a drug that would work as well for you on your plan's drug list. And, if you have already tried similar drugs and they didn't work, or if your doctor believes that because of your medical condition it's necessary for you to take a certain drug, he or she can contact your plan to request an exception. If your doctor's request is approved, the plan will cover the drug.

If you enroll in a Medicare drug plan after March 31, 2006, Medicare requires drug plans to fill your prescriptions once, within the first 30 days your coverage is in effect, even if the prescription is for a drug that's not on the plan's drug list (or is a step-therapy drug). This gives you and your doctor time to find another drug on the plan's drug list that would work as well or time for your doctor to request an exception due to any special medical needs you have for a specific drug. If your doctor's request is approved, the plan will cover the drug."

(Excerpt from CMS Pub. No. 11194, **"What Drugs do Medicare Plans Cover?"**)

<http://www.medicare.gov/Publications/Search/Results.asp?PubID=11194&Type=PubID&Language=English&pagelist=Home&dest=NAV%7CHome%7CSearch%7CResults%7CSearchCriteria&comingFrom=13&version=default&browser=IE%7C6%7CWinXP&go1.x=19&go1.y=7>

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS RELEVANT TO THE TRANSITION PERIOD

Other questions and answers relevant to the transition period can be found at:

http://questions.cms.hhs.gov/cgi-bin/cms/hhs.cfg/php/enduser/std_alp.php?p_sid=GU*jx13i

ID# 5869 “If it happens that dual eligible beneficiaries received a richer benefit under Medicare than under Part D plans, what happens during the transition when they will no longer have coverage for the richer prescription benefit?”

ID#5847 “Will plans be able to cover benzodiazepines and barbiturates as part of the transition process for individuals in long-term care facilities?”

ID#4038 “Will Medicaid still pay for drugs for full-benefit dual eligible beneficiaries who are not part of the list of ‘covered drugs’ under the Medicare drug benefit?”

ID#4483 “Can Part D plans cover over-the-counter products in step therapy protocols since they may provide significant cost savings when compared to legend counterparts?”

ID# 6106 “What steps will CMS take to reach Medicare beneficiaries who have been displaced to ensure they have the necessary information to enroll in a prescription drug plan, or in the case of dual eligibles, to know in which plan they are enrolled?”

PUBLICATIONS WITH EXCELLENT INFORMATION ON TRANSITION

“More Time to Fill the Prescriptions You Need,” Pub. 11193,
www.cms.hhs.gov/States/Downloads/Transition/ExtensionTipSheet.pdf

Physician Part D Resource Fact Sheet, transition piece
www.axpoline.org/pmc/partd_facts.pdf

Medicare Drug Reimbursement Guide, March 2006
<http://www.medicarerxguide.com/MDRG/mdrg0603.pdf>

For those beneficiaries who have both Medicare and Medicaid, some states are continuing to cover all or some of the above excluded drugs. Please go to: www.cms.hhs.gov/States/EDC/list.asp#TopOfPage

Part D Grievances, Coverage Determinations, and Appeals
<http://cmsnet.cms.hhs.gov/projects/cwpm/factsheetgca.pdf>

Medicare Part D Appeals Process
<http://cmsnet.cms.hhs.gov/projects/cwpm/partdchart.pdf>

Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage: How to File a Complaint, Coverage Determination, or Appeal, Pub. 11112

<http://www.medicare.gov/Publications/Search/Results.asp?PubID=11112&Type=PubID&Language=English&pagelist=Home&dest=NAV%7CHome%7CSearch%7CResults%7CSearchCriteria&comingFrom=13&version=default&browser=IE%7C6%7CWinXP&go1.x=17&go1.y=3>



TRAINING MATERIAL

National Medicare & You Training Webcast on March 2, 2006

The PowerPoint presentation entitled “Working with Plan Formularies: Transition Supplies, Prior Authorization, Quantity Limits, etc.” is an excellent resource about the transition phase. Go to: http://www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalMedicareYouTrain/09_MedicareRxConferenceCalls.asp and the recorded session is available at: <http://media.cms.hhs.gov/cms/partner03022006.wma>

National Medicare & You Training Conference Call on March 24, 2006

“Coverage Determinations and Appeals under the Medicare Prescription Drug Program” was the topic of a conference call on March 24. The PowerPoint presentation is available online at: www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalMedicareYouTrain/09_MedicareRxConferenceCalls.asp